

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE IN SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

****Southwest Virginia represents the Cumberland Plateau, Lenowisco, and Mount Rogers health districts, which include the following counties: Bland, Bristol, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Grayson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, and Wise counties, and the cities of Norton and Galax.**

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is not a single disease but a category of disorders that affect the heart and blood vessels. Coronary heart disease, stroke and hypertension are all forms of cardiovascular disease. Mortality rates for CVD in Southwest Virginia are among the highest in the state. The prevalence of heart disease, stroke and hypertension among adults in the Southwest Virginia health districts of Mount Rogers, Cumberland Plateau and Lenowisco surpass that of the state as a whole. In fact, at 8.5 percent, adults in Lenowisco have the highest rate of heart attacks in Virginia.

Risk Factors

Risk factors for cardiovascular disease include tobacco use, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol.

The percent of adults who use tobacco, a leading risk factor for cardiovascular disease, is higher in all three districts than the 20.8 percent state rate.

All three districts have a higher percent of adults with high blood pressure than the state's 26.7 percent.

All three districts have a higher or equal percent of adults who have high cholesterol than the state's 36.2 percent.

Only the Mt. Rogers Health District has a heart disease death rate below the state death rate of 200.5 per 100,000 population for 2004.

What VDH is Doing

The Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Project (HDSP) in the Lenowisco Health District works to increase awareness of heart attack and stroke signs and symptoms; promote the placement of automated external defibrillation (AED) and CPR training, facilitating VDH's blood pressure measurement standardization training for health care providers and promoting awareness of cardiovascular disease risks and secondary prevention in the Hispanic community.

VDH's HDSP and Diabetes projects partner with the Virginia Primary Care Association to improve health outcomes for patients in the area's community health centers who have specific medical conditions, including diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

VDH has established tobacco use control coalitions in the Lenowisco and Mt. Rogers health districts. The Lenowisco Health District works to increase the proportion of smoke-free

worksites, promote awareness of the dangers of secondhand smoke and promote tobacco cessation programs. The Alliance for Control of Tobacco operates in both districts and is working with area hospitals to encourage parents to adopt smoke-free policies in their homes and reduce secondhand smoke around newborns. The hospitals provide toolkits to new moms through their obstetrics departments. Coalition members are working with the Clinch Valley Medical Center in its efforts to become a tobacco free facility including outside grounds.